

Single Building Historic Districts



**PRESENTATION TO
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Chapter 40C



- Chapter 40C was established in 1960.
- The Act permits towns to preserve one or more buildings by creating historic districts.
- Local historic district bylaws regulate exterior modifications to protected buildings.
- There are over 200 single building local historic districts and more than 230 multiple building historic districts in the Commonwealth.

Historic Districts and Wellesley



- Wellesley created Historic District zoning provisions in 1980.
- The Cottage Street Historic District is the only multiple building historic district in Wellesley.
 - Established in 1980 with 61 properties
- Two single building historic districts were established in 2011.
 - Methodist Meeting House Historic District (377 Weston Road)
 - Tufts House Historic District (38 Lowell Road)

Historic Districts and Wellesley



- The Cottage Street Historic District and the Single Building Historic Districts are administered by the Wellesley Historic District Commission (WHDC).
- The WHDC issues a Certificate of Appropriateness for approved exterior changes visible from a public way.

Historic District Overlay Zone



Preserving Historic Properties in Wellesley



- The 2007-2017 Comprehensive Plan urged finding a way to preserve individual historic properties.
- Two property owners requested their historic homes be preserved.
- As previously, Chapter 40C of MGL was used to preserve individual buildings.
- A study committee was established by the Board of Selectmen to study the two properties and arrive at a recommendation.
- The Study Committee is now recommending a zoning map amendment to apply the Historic District Overlay Zone to two properties:
 - 26 Elmwood Road (Parcel ID 72-20)
 - 126 Woodlawn Avenue (Parcel ID 181-75)

Proposed Sylvia Plath House Historic District

26 Elmwood Road



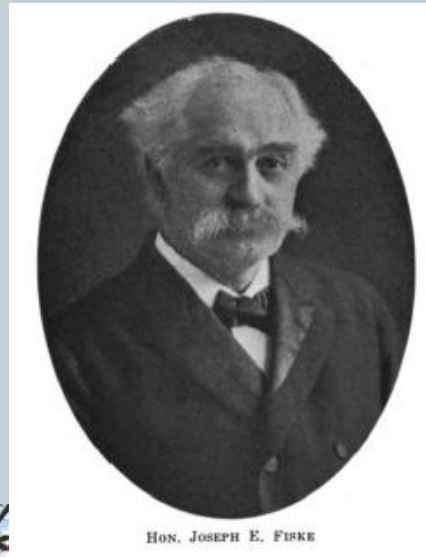
Historical Significance



- The Study Committee finds that the historical significance of the Sylvia Plath House makes it worthy of preservation.
- The property is significant due to its famous resident, Sylvia Plath.
 - Sylvia Plath attended Wellesley public schools, and her experiences while living in Wellesley, including the home itself, figure prominently in her writing, especially *The Bell Jar*.
 - Her house in Wellesley, which has been little altered since she lived there, is an important piece of the puzzle to understanding a life tragically cut short at the age of 30.

Proposed Fiske House Historic District

126 Woodlawn Avenue



Historical Significance



- The Study Committee finds that the historical significance of the Fiske House makes it worthy of preservation.
- Lifelong residence of Joseph Emery Fiske (1839-1909)
 - Led the separation of Wellesley from Needham in 1881
 - Fiske School is named for him honoring his service to the first School Committee
 - Contributed to the development and character of Wellesley Farms
- Structure underwent significant renovation in 1937 yet maintains its Colonial Revival architecture.
 - Most notably, the structure was rotated 90 degrees to face east from its original south face.
- Only four families have resided in the house since its construction.

Single Building Historic Districts Benefit Wellesley



- The Sylvia Plath House and the Fiske House are worthy of designation as Single Building Local Historic Districts.
- Each property offers a unique perspective on Wellesley's history and famous residents.
- Wellesley has found a tool to preserve individual historic properties, as suggested by the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
- The Study Committee recommends the establishment of two new Single Building Local Historic Districts by the 2014 Annual Town Meeting.

Proposed Zoning Map Amendment



- If approved by Town Meeting, the proposed zoning map amendment would apply the Historic District Overlay Zoning District to two properties:
 - 26 Elmwood Road – Sylvia Plath House Historic District
 - 126 Woodlawn Avenue – Fiske House Historic District
- Overlay zoning does not change underlying zoning.

Proposed Zoning Map Amendment

